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Bread winner

Soon it will be safe to turn on your oven again, so let's make it good. "Focaccia, Simple Breads from the Italian Oven," by Carol Field, will tempt you with Cornmeal Schiacciata with Walnuts, Whole Wheat Focaccia with Olive Paste and Basil-Filled Spiral Focaccia, as well as sweet focaccias. It inspires experimentation, so stock your pantry well. Published by Chronicle Books, it sells for \$15.95.



FOOD

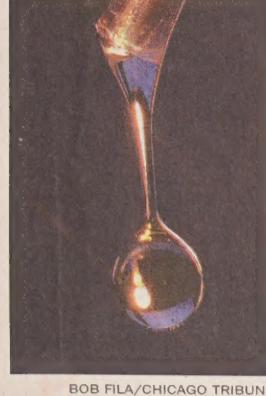
CLASSIFIEDS • 4 SECTION
TV/WEATHER • 14

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SEW SIMPLE:

His-and-hers matching robes would be an easy gift to make for Christmas.

C7



BOB FILA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

It was only a matter of time until the American food industry turned its attention to one of our most common sources of fat: cooking oils.

More oil options to flow

■ Cooking product latest staple to try to meet the demands of health-conscious consumers

BY BETSY A. HORNICK

Chicago Tribune

More over olive oil and canola oil — a new generation of more healthful salad and cooking oils is hitting the shelves. These "designer" oils have joined the surge of so-called functional food products taking the place of traditional foods in the quest for good health — and revenue.

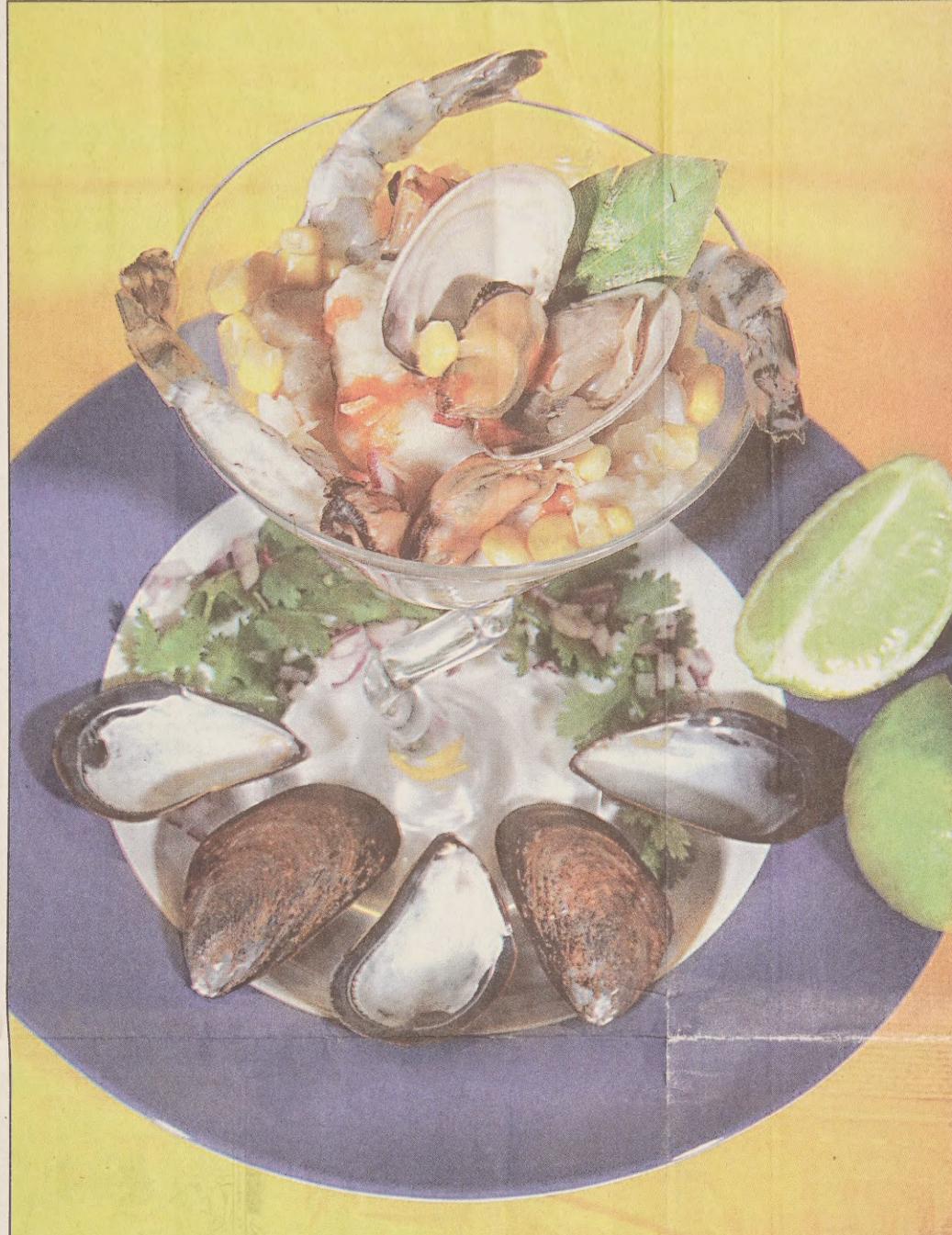
"Oil manufacturers are looking for ways to improve the attractiveness of their products," said Robert Reeves, president of the Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils, an industry organization. "Oils are a dietary staple so they serve as a good medium for introducing health benefits."

Making a product like cooking oil more healthful may sound like a formidable goal, but it is one of the latest categories of food to undergo a redesign to meet the demands of health-conscious consumers.

Diane Quagliani, a dietitian and nutrition consultant based in Western Springs, Ill., put this in perspective. "Products like the more healthful cooking oils are not a magic bullet," Quagliani said. "They only offer benefits when used wisely as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle."

Some designer oils are fortified with nutrients, such as vitamin E or beta carotene. Others are reformulated or genetically modified with enhanced nutrient profiles, such as less saturated fat, more omega-3 fat (which has been found to lower blood triglycerides, a risk factor for heart disease) or with

See DESIGNER on PAGE D2



CHRISTOPHER ALUKA/KNIGHT RIDDER

A marinade of lime and spices "cooks" fish and shellfish, resulting in ceviche.

a RARE treat

Citrus-marinated ceviche adds a splash of spice to table

BY ALLISON ASKINS
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Legend has it that Latin American fishermen so savored their catches, they would squeeze limes over fish caught in the morning and indulge in the flavors by lunch.

Today that dish is known and loved as ceviche. You might also find it spelled

Fish and more

Recipes for the 'in' food
D2

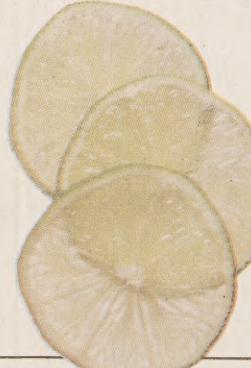
"seviche" or "ceviche."

Basically a seafood salad, ceviche is prepared by cutting fresh pieces of fish and "cooking" them in a marinade of lime and spices. The dish never sees the

flame of a grill or the heat of a stove, though. The citrus juices do all the cooking.

In chic cities such as New York, the dish is delighting diners, much like sushi, in bars known as cevicherias.

Linda Stradley, author of the cookbook "I'll Have What They're Having" (Three Forks Press, 2002), refers to the dish as the "in food" for the beginning of the 21st century."



New Mexico's Own



PATRICIA AARON

For the Journal

Prickly pear's tang is tender

This summer, Patricia Aaron introduces you to some items you might not use regularly. This week: Meet prickly pear cactus.

Prickly pear cactus provides food in two seasons, spring and autumn. In spring the plant produces tender young stems or pads (nopales) with few spines, for nopalitos. Nopalitos can be used raw in salads when silver dollar-size, or peeled, sliced and cooked as a vegetable when larger.

In autumn the yellow flower of the cactus is followed by an abundance of sweet, purple-red fruit the size of a large egg. Native Americans used prickly pear cactus both for food and medicinal use. The roots were ground for a healing poultice and used to make a diuretic tea.

DESCRIPTION: Prickly pear fruit, filled with small edible seeds, is sometimes called tunas, pears or Indian figs. The fruit is wrapped in firm skin dotted with spines that can get under the skin like fiberglass. Use tongs to collect, clean and cut the fruit. Prickly pear fruit is sweet like watermelon.

NUTRITION: The fruit is low in calories (about 40 for 4 ounces of edible pulp) and high in fiber, vitamin C and potassium. It is low in sodium.

EQUIVALENTS: One to two prickly pear fruits equal one serving. Four large fruits weigh about one pound.

TO BUY: Choose prickly pear fruits that are full and deeply colored, with tender, unwrinkled skin. A fruit should be a uniform egg shape with few blemishes or no soft spots. It should be firm, but not rock-hard, with bright skin.

TO STORE: If firm, ripen fruit at room temperature a few days. Refrigerate when tender up to five days. Freeze juice up to one year.

TO PREPARE: For fruits that are to be sliced or puréed, cover with boiling water one minute, then drain. To peel, hold the fruit with a fork and slice 1/2 inch off both ends. Cut a lengthwise slit one-fourth inch deep. Slip the tip of a knife under the skin and thick under-layer, then pull away both layers.

TO USE: Serve whole,

See PRICKLY on PAGE D2

Great in guacamole, avocados can also be gussied up

BY RUSS PARSONS

Los Angeles Times

The first couple of weeks of avocado season, I was satisfied with something I learned from chef/restaurateur Evan Kleiman many years ago: Roughly purée an avocado with a fork, tart it up with some lemon juice, then season it with salt and pepper. Lots of pepper. Black pepper, coarsely ground.

Spread this on a split, toasted focaccia roll and you've got one of the simplest, most delicious summer dishes you can imagine.

It's but a short step from there to soup. Because

avocados are so dense and so flavorful, you need only a blender and some chicken stock to make a quite voluptuous bisque. A little sour dairy, such as yogurt, adds depth of flavor, but don't stir it in until just before you're ready to serve it. An enzyme in the avocado changes the taste of the milk if it sits for long.

As with guacamole, I prefer my avocado soups rather plain (my favorite guac is still the one I learned back in the late '60s from New Mexico magazine: mashed avocado and garlic salt). But that doesn't mean you can't dress them up with garnishes as simple as snipped chives or as fancy as kernels cut from an

ear of grilled corn or goat cheese-chive quenelles — simple to make, but impressively high-fashion.

COLD AVOCADO BISQUE WITH GOAT CHEESE-CHIVE QUENELLES

Total time: 20 minutes, plus at least 1/2 hour chilling time

Servings: 6

3 cloves garlic

2 pounds avocados (3 large), seeded, peeled and coarsely chopped

4 cups chicken stock

1/2 teaspoons salt

1/4 pound (1/2 cup) fresh goat cheese

2 tablespoons minced chives

1/2 cup yogurt

With the blender running, remove the plastic cap and drop the garlic cloves through the hole in the lid to mince. Turn the machine off and add the chopped avocado.

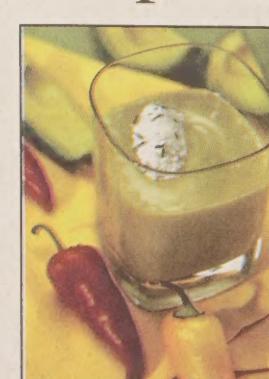
With the machine running on medium speed, slowly add the chicken stock, pouring through the hole in the lid. Add the salt and turn the speed up to high to make a smooth, velvety purée. (Do in batches if necessary.) Chill until serving time.

While the soup is chilling (one-half hour to 2 hours), beat together the goat cheese and the chives to make a smooth, soft paste.

When ready to serve, whisk yogurt into soup and divide soup evenly into 6 bowls.

Using 2 teaspoons, form the goat cheese into 6 quenelles and place one in the center of each bowl. To form a quenelle, use one spoon to scoop up enough of the goat cheese mixture to fill its bowl. Use the other spoon to scoop the mixture out of the first spoon, turning it over to create a smooth side. Repeat a couple of times until the mixture is an attractive smooth-sided oval. Or, you can just scoop a less-than-perfect spoonful in the center of each bowl.

See FLAVORFUL on PAGE D2



CARLOS CHAVEZ / LOS ANGELES TIMES

Easy-to-make Goat Cheese-Chive Quenelles add a creamy tang to Cold Avocado Bisque.

Flavorful avocados are more than guacamole

from PAGE D1

GRILLED CORN AND AVOCADO SALAD WITH LIME-CUMIN VINAIGRETTE

Total time: 20 minutes

Servings: 6

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon puréed garlic
2 teaspoons salt
6 tablespoons lime juice (preferably from small, sweet Mexican limes)

1/4 cup oil
2 pounds (about 3 large) avocados, pitted
2 ears of corn, grilled and husked
1/4 pound radishes (about 12 medium)

1/4 cup diced red onion

Prepare the dressing by whisking together the cumin-garlic-salt mixture and lime

juice in a small bowl. Slowly add the oil, whisking constantly.

Prepare the salad by thinly slicing the pitted avocados, then carefully peeling away the skin from each slice. Put the avocado slices in a mixing bowl, pour 2 tablespoons of dressing over the top and stir gently to coat. Remove the avocado, draining the excess dressing back into the mixing bowl, and arrange the slices on a serving platter.

Using a large, sharp knife, cut the kernels away from the corn into the mixing bowl.

Quarter the radishes lengthwise. If they are large, cut them in half widthwise. Add the radishes and onion to the corn in the bowl along with the remaining dressing and stir to coat well.

Using a slotted spoon,

remove the vegetables from the dressing, draining the excess dressing back into the mixing bowl. Mound the vegetables on top of the avocados. Serve immediately.

PER SERVING: 295 calories; 3 grams protein; 16 grams carbohydrates; 7 grams fiber; 27 grams fat; 4 grams saturated fat; 0 cholesterol; 793 mg. sodium.

CARNE ASADA SANDWICHES WITH AVOCADOS AND CHIPOTLE MAYONNAISE

Total time: 30 minutes, plus 30 minutes marinating time

Servings: 6
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
3 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons salt, divided



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

CACTUS CONCOCTIONS

Patricia Aaron, Extension Home Economist
Bernalillo County

PRICKLY PEAR JUICE

To prepare prickly pear cactus juice, singe spines of 20 prickly pear fruit. Clean fruit and brush with a vegetable brush. Wash in running water and place in a large pan with enough water to cover. Boil 20 minutes or until tender. Drain and crush with a potato masher. Line a colander with 2 thickness of muslin. Strain mashed fruit and measure 2-1/2 cups juice.

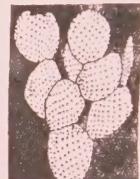
PRICKLY PEAR JELLY

2-1/2 cups cactus juice
1 package powdered pectin
3 tablespoons lemon juice
3-1/2 cups sugar

Combine juice and pectin in a large pan. Bring to a fast boil, stirring constantly, and add lemon juice and sugar. Bring to a hard boil and boil 3-5 minutes or until jelly sheets from a metal spoon. Remove from heat. Stir and skim off foam. Pour jelly into hot canning jars, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Wipe jar rims and seal. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes about 6 pints.



CACTUS COOKIES



1/2 cup butter
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup sour cream
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup prickly pear juice
1/4 cup prickly pear fruit, peeled, seeded, diced
1/4 cup maraschino cherries

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Grease a baking sheet. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar. Blend in sour cream, egg and vanilla. In a medium-size bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt; blend into sour cream mixture. Stir in prickly pear juice and fruit and cherries. Drop from a teaspoon onto greased baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven 15 to 18 minutes. Makes 2-1/2 dozen.

CACTUS PICKLE

2 quarts prickly pear fruit
2 cups sugar
2/3 cup white vinegar
3 oz. red cinnamon candies
Whole cloves, if desired

Using gloves, peel prickly pear fruit and cut each fruit in half lengthwise; remove seeds. In a large pan, combine sugar, vinegar, cinnamon candies and cloves, if desired. Cook to a syrup. Add fruit and cook until fruit is transparent. Remove cloves and ladle fruit and syrup into hot canning jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and seal. Process 15 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes about 4 pints.

PRICKLY PEAR COBBLER

Dough:

1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
Pinch salt
1/4 cup margarine
5 tablespoons milk

Filling:

4 cups prickly pear fruit
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
3 teaspoons tapioca

Sauce:

1/4 cup margarine
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 tablespoons lemonade granules
Water

To prepare dough, in a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder and salt. Cut in margarine until mixture is consistency of corn meal. Add milk and mix until dough forms. Turn onto floured board and roll in a large circle. Cut in 4 pie-shaped wedges.

To prepare filling, peel and seed prickly pear fruit. Spread cut-up fruit over pastry wedges and sprinkle with cinnamon, nutmeg and tapioca. Roll up and place in a medium-size baking dish.

To prepare sauce, in a small pan, combine margarine, sugar and vanilla. Add lemonade granules with enough water to make 1 cup liquid. Heat sauce until margarine melts and sugar is dissolved. Pour over cobbler. Bake at 350 degrees F 1 hour or until crust is brown. Makes 4 servings.

NOPALITOS

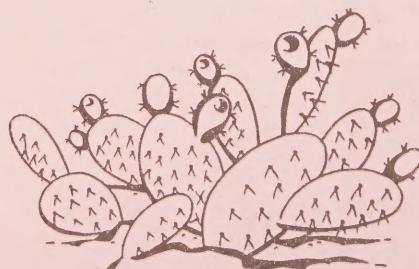
Using tongs, collect new, young, tender pads, 1-to 3-inches in length, in the spring. In a saucepan, cover pads with water. If desired, add 1 large garlic clove, 1 slice of onion and 1 ear of sweet corn for flavoring. Boil 20 minutes and drain. Using a sharp knife, scrape off stickers and rubbery leaves; trim edge of pad about 1/16 inch. Rinse pad well. Be sure all stickers are removed.

Sprinkle chopped nopalitos on a bowl of beans, add to a tossed salad or stir into any casserole.

CACTUS CONDIMENT

1/4 cup chopped green onion
3 tablespoons red chile paste
Vegetable oil
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup nopalitos

In a skillet, saute onion in oil until transparent. Add nopalitos and saute about 1 minute. Add red chile paste and water; simmer until nopalitos are well-saturated with sauce. Use as a sauce for meat. Makes about 1 cup.



BHHC-1-2-20 Prickly Pear

